

Section 144 In West Bengal's Sandeshkhali: BJP man shot, hacked to death

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KOLKATA/SANDESHKHALI/KALIGANJ: A 30-year-old BJP worker was killed in Nadia, women protesters freed a detained party worker from cops in Sandeshkhali, and accusations of attacks on party agents and workers swirled in Kolkata, mirroring a familiar pattern of post-poll violence in Bengal. BJP blamed TMC, but CM Mamata Banerjee's party rejected the allegations.

In Nadia, Hafizul Sheikh was playing carrom in Kaliganj's Chandghar area around 8pm on Saturday when 10-12 men arrived on bikes and opened fire. As he fell, the assailants hit him with a sharp weapon. Locals stopped the police from taking Sheikh's body for autopsy. The cops, however, managed to do so after two hours. Sheikh's family said he was a CPM worker and had joined

BJP a few months ago. BJP Krishnanagar candidate Amrita Roy visited the spot later.

BJP leaders claimed the attackers were linked to TMC, which the party rubbished. "The death seems to have been caused because of a family feud. We will not be surprised if he had been a victim of BJP's internal bickering," TMC's Kunal Ghosh said.

In Sandeshkhali hundreds of women, accompanied by local BJP functionaries, put up a roadblock on Saturday, after a party worker was thrashed by alleged TMC supporters while on way to vote. The mobs later fought with

cops who came to break the gridlock. A sub-inspector was hit with a brick and suffered a head injury.

Early on Sunday, prohibitory orders restricting gatherings were imposed in 17 pockets of Sandeshkhali till Tuesday morning. The cops had picked up BJP worker Sadhan Nandy, in raids linked to Saturday's violence. Later, a group of women armed with brooms and sticks intercepted the police vehicle and freed him from cops. More personnel, including central force jawans, were later rushed to the spot.

CPM candidates Sujan Chakraborty and Srijan Bhattacharya claimed their workers were threatened by TMC. TMC MP Santanu Sen rejected it saying, "Trinamool is not associated with these incidents as we know we will win."